

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2232

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 21097

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, CG

SUBJECT: GISCARD VISIT TO ZAIRE AUGUST 7-9

REF: (A) PARIS 20966 (B) KINSHASA 7374

SUMMARY: GISCARD USED ZAIRE TRIP TO BUILD UP HIS
IMAGE AS CHAMPION OF THE THIRD WORLD. HIS STATEMENTS
ON "NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER", THE FRENCH NON-
EMBARGO OF SOUTH AFRICAN ARMS SALES, A COPPER PRODUCER/
CONSUMER CONFERENCE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH
ZAIRE WERE ALL PART OF VGE'S CAMPAIGN TO SHOW THAT
FRANCE IS A TRUE FRIEND OF THE LDC'S. IN THE NORTH-
SOUTH DIALOGUES AHEAD, GOF WILL CONTINUE PLAYING BOTH
SIDES OF THE STREET IN ACCORDANCE WITH A POLICY
DE GAULLE ORIGINATED BUT GISCARD IS FURTHER EXPLOITING
FOR FRANCE'S ADVANTAGE. END SUMMARY.

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1. QUAI ACTING AFRICAN DIRECTOR REMOVILLE DISCUSSED GISCARD'S STATE VISIT TO ZAIRE AUGUST 7-9 WITH EMBOFF AUGUST 13. IN ADDITION TO HIS COMMENTS ON GISCARD'S NON-EMBARGO OF ARMS SALES TO SOUTH AFRICA REPORTED IN REF A, REMOVILLE'S VIEWS DID NOT DIFFER OR GO BEYOND EMBASSY KINSHASA'S FULL COVERAGE IN REF B.

2. ON THE BROAD RANGE OF SUBJECTS COVERED BY THE JOINT FRANCO-ZAIRE COMMUNIQUE, REMOVILLE MADE EFFORT TO PLAY DOWN SIGNIFICANCE OF GISCARD'S VISIT. HE EMPHASIZED IT WAS NOT VGE INITIATIVE, BUT RESULTED FROM TRIP POMPIDOU HAD PLANNED. SIMILARLY, REMOVILLE DENIED THAT ANY NEW GROUND HAD BEEN BROKEN IN SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS. NOT ONLY WAS FRENCH ARMS SALES POLICY ESTABLISHED LAST APRIL, AS PER REF A, BUT ALSO GISCARD'S STATEMENTS CHAMPIONING "NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER" WERE A REPLAY OF WHAT HE HAD SAID IN ALGERIA AND BANGUI EARLIER THIS YEAR, ACCORDING TO REMOVILLE. HE ALSO SAID THAT NEWS REPORTS OF GOF GRANTING DEBT MORATORIUM' WERE EXAGGERATED; FRENCH ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR ZAIRE HAD EITHER BEEN DETERMINED BEFORE GISCARD'S VISIT (WHICH APPEARS CONFIRMED BY STATE 182865) OR REMAIN FOR DETAILED NEGOTIATION IN FUTURE.

3. REMOVILLE SAID GOF HAS NOT HEARD ANY CRITICISM FROM BELGIAN GOVERNMENT OF FRENCH ACTIVISM IN A FORMER COLONY WHERE BRUSSELS RETAINS IMPORTANT ECONOMIC INTERESTS. ALSO, GISCARD' IN HIS KINSHASA PRESS CONFERENCE AUGUST 9, SAID (ACCORDING TO LE MONDE TEXT) "BELGIUM IS ASSOCIATED EITHER WITH OUR AGREEMENTS OR WITH OUR EFFORTS. ... IT IS IMPORTANT TO MULTIPLY AS WIDELY AS POSSIBLE THE BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN COUNTRIES WHICH BELONG TO EITHER THE EC OR AFRICA." REMOVILLE SAID THAT GISCARD HAD ALSO BEEN CAREFUL IN HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH MOBUTU TO AVOID COMMITTING GOF ON TOUCHY ISSUES OF ANGOLA AND CABINDA' DESPITE EMPHASIS

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ON THE PART OF ZAIRE'S PRESIDENT.

4. COMMENT: DESPITE REMOVILLE'S DISCLAIMERS, WE BELIEVE GISCARD USED HIS ZAIRE VISIT AS MAJOR PLATFORM TO BUILD HIS IMAGE AS CHAMPION OF THE THIRD WORLD. KINSHASA WAS WELL CHOSEN BECAUSE IT IS A MAJOR POWER IN BLACK AFRICA; OF ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE BUT WITHOUT COLONIAL TIES TO FRANCE. VISIT CAME AT A TIME WHEN GOF BELIEVES MOBUTU FELT ISOLATED AND WHEN GISCARD'S WELCOME WAS ASSURED BY PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS. GISCARD HEAPED COMPLIMENTS ON MOBUTU AND ON ZAIRIAN ENERGY AND "AUTHENTICITY". BY ADOPTING THE LDC SLOGAN OF "NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER" (WITHOUT DEFINING IT) AND PROPOSING A PRODUCER/CONSUMER CONFERENCE ON COPPER, GISCARD WAS POSING AS THIRD WORLD'S DEPENDABLE
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FRIEND, ESPECIALLY WITH PHRASES SUCH AS, IN HIS ARRIVAL STATEMENT, "NOW THAT THEY MUST LIMIT THEIR NATURAL DESIRES, THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES MUST LEARN TO SHARE." GISCARD CAPPED THIS PERFORMANCE WITH HIS WELL-ORCHESTRATED, ALTHOUGH ESSENTIALLY MEANINGLESS, ANNOUNCEMENT ON ARMS SALES TO SOUTH AFRICA.

FRANCE'S PRETENTION OF EXERCISING LEADERSHIP IN THE THIRD WORLD IS LARGELY A CONTINUATION OF POLICY DE GAULLE ESTABLISHED AND POMPIDOU NURTURED. GISCARD WILL ATTEMPT TO IMPRINT HIS OWN IMAGE OR THIS IN THE

MONTHS AHEAD. IN EFFECT, A NEW CHAPTER IN THIS GOF
POLICY OPENED WITH THE ENERGY CRISIS WHEN GISCARD
QUICKLY CONCLUDED THAT IT PRESAGED A NEW POWER RELA-
TIONSHIP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR NATIONS. HIS ZAIRE
VISIT CONFIRMS THAT IN THE VARIOUS NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUES
AHEAD' INCLUDING THE 7TH SPECIAL UNGA AND THE CONFER-
ENCE GISCARD WILL LAUNCH ON ENERGY AND RAW MATERIALS,
FRANCE WILL EMPHASIZE ITS "INDEPENDENT" ROLE. GISCARD
BELIEVES THAT HE HAS THE RIGHT CREDENTIALS FOR WORKING
BOTH SIDES OF THE STREET. HE WILL GAIN MAXIMUM AD-
VANTAGE FOR FRANCE BY SHOWING SOLIDARITY WITH BOTH THE
DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH
A PRAGMATIC RATHER THAN A DOCTRINAIRE OUTLOOK.
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